A MESSAGE TO NEW INITIATES

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A MESSAGE TO NEW INITIATES

Divine Radiant Atman!

You are a child, a ray, of God the Almighty. You should, therefore, somehow or other, try to unite yourself with Him.

Worldly relations are transient, imperfect and impermanent. It is when we identify ourselves with these changing and evanescent relations that we feel miserable and restless. Our saints and sages who had the knowledge of the three periods of time—past, present and future—during their superconscious state realised the Truth and subsequently declared that God alone is eternal, pure, everlasting and perfect. It is only by knowing Him that one can have supreme peace and bliss. This is the only purpose of human life.

There are four Purusharthas (ideals of life)—Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha (virtue, wealth, desire and liberation). Artha and Kama, unless governed by Dharma, cannot become means of liberation. Liberation is the ultimate freedom. This human birth goes waste if one leaves one's mortal coil without acquiring this supreme freedom through the knowledge of the Truth.

We have inherited our knowledge and culture from the Vedas. They were not written by any human being but were revealed by the Lord Himself. As Vedas have no origin, our religion which is based on them is called Sanatana Dharma, the eternal religion. This Sanatana Dharma is the creatrix and origin of all other religions and cults.

There are many methods, any one of which you can adopt for attaining God-realisation. Our saints and sages have shown many different ways according to their own experiences and to suit the nature of the

aspirants. I shall deal here with one of them and hope that you will pay due attention to it.

Our forefathers have described that eternal, pure Principle as formless and attributeless, and also as having form and attributes. The formless and attributeless Principle is unmanifest and invisible to the senses and intellect, while the one with form and attributes is manifest and is therefore visible. In between the manifest and unmanifest, there appeared the Cosmic Sound called 'Nada Brahman' or 'Sabda Brhaman'. It serves as the link between the two principle—the one with form and attributes and the other without form and attributes.

Based on this 'Nada Brahman' a system of spiritual practice has been formulated, which goes by the name of 'Japa Yoga' or 'Nama-Sadhana' (practice of the Name). This method continues to be in vogue from ancient times right up to the present day. The chain of

Guru-Parampara which has brought down this treasure of Japa Yoga Sadhana to us never suffered a break, so much so it is prevalent in its original form even today. Lord Krishana Himself has glorified Nama-Japa by saying: *"Yajnanam japayajnosmi"*—Among sacrifices, I am the sacrifice of silent repetition' (Gita: X-25). The Lord Himself is present in the Mantra and in its Japa.

Saints too, time and often declared and do so even now, that there is actually no difference between the Name (of the Lord) and the Named (the Lord Himself). Sages, at times, say that the Name of the Lord is superior even to the Lord Himself. Goswami Tulsidas says: 'Rama's Name is verily superior to Rama.'

In the Srimad Bhagavata, you will find the consoling statement that in this age of Kali, one can obtain release from the bondage of birth and death through mere chanting of Sri Hari's Name.

Among the four Yugas (ages) 'Kali' is the fourth one. In the preceding three Yugas, the Satya, Treta and Dvapara, man was long-lived, powerful, able and intelligent. He had many superhuman powers at his command. He could travel to other higher planes (Lokas) as well. In those ages, the Lord used to appear on earth before His chosen devotees. But in this Kaliyuga, man's power, intelligence and ability have, considerably diminished, and so he is not able to see the Lord face to face. Man has lost all his supernatural divine powers.

The devotees, apprehending the advent of Kaliyuga, prayed to the Lord and asked: "O Lord, in Kaliyuga, when men become lacking in strength and intelligence, when unrighteousness has sway over all and when Your devotees are subjected to all sorts of persecutions, how will they be then able to get protection?" The Lord, moved by their longing for public weal, assured them and said : "I am aware of that; I shall, in Kaliyuga, be needed more. You need not, therefore, have any

worry. I am revealing one of My mighty powers for Kali. I shall appear before those persons who have faith in it and feel My presence in it." That mighty power of the Lord, revealed by Him is His Name. He is verily manifest in it.

The Name that is manifest in the form of Mantra, was revealed to the seers in their superconscious state (Samadhi). The knower of a Mantra is called the seer of that Mantra. A Mantra is named after the seer to whom it was revealed first. Each Mantra has got its own separate Deity, and its Japa will yield a distinct result.

There is a method enjoined by the scriptures for repeating the Mantra (Mantra-Japa). It is through the repetition of the Mantra by the prescribed method that the latent power of the Mantra becomes manifest. The subconscious layers of the mind of the person are also awakened. The Mantra, through its repetition, leads to perfection in due course of time. The individual obtains the

summum bonum of life by the realisation of Supreme Self and attainment of bliss and final liberation.

The constant repetition of a Mantra transforms the very life of the aspirant. His evil qualities slowly disappear and divine qualities take their place. Rajas and Tamas get transmuted into Sattva.

A Mantra is Divinity and through its repetition the extrovert mind becomes introvert, the tossing of the mind is removed and mind along with the senses is subdued. Mantra-Japa thus done with one-pointed mind, takes the aspirant to the state of Japa-Sahita Dhyana (meditation with Japa) which subseqently takes the form of Japa-Rahita Dhyana (meditation without Japa). The aspirant in his superconscious state (Samadhi) gets Self-realisation which is the same as God-realisation. This is what Mantra Yoga implies.

Our ancestors, the seers, through their own efforts, perfected themselves through the Japa of the Mantras first, and thereafter they initiated their disciples into their secrets. This tradition continues even today with all its importance and significance as ever before. Many saints have reached that perfected state and attained God-realisation. Instances are not rare even today.

If a disciple receives Mantra initiation from his Guru, he actually receives his own accumulated power due to his past meritorious Karmas. The Japa continued for a pretty long period becomes part and parcel of his Sadhana (spiritual practice). For this type of Sadhana, no special qualification is required. What is needed is full faith in and unstinted devotion to one's Guru (preceptor).

In other systems of Yogic practice, there are several strict rules and regulations to be followed. And the preceptor has to distinguish between the qualified and the non-qualified

before he gives initiation in those systems. But in Japa Yoga Sadhana, this can be obviated, for, the repetition of a Mantra itself transforms a non-qualified person into a qualified person, the impure into the pure and a sinner into a saint. This is the unique advantage of Japa Yoga.

RULES FOR MANTRA-JAPA

An aspirant should have implicit faith and belief in his Mantra and should surrender himself fully to the Ishta Devata. He should, without fail follow all the instructions given by his preceptor at the time of initiation. But if his preceptor has not given any special instruction, he should follow the general rules given below :

1. He should have complete belief that he can attain God-realisation through Mantra-Japa, in this Kaliyuga.

2. Mantra-Diksha (initiation) being a most sacred ritual, should not be taken lightly. The aspirant should not get himself

initiated just to imitate others. He should approach his Guru with unwavering mind and firm determination and complete faith in the efficacy of Mantra-Japa.

3 Mantra should he taken as Divinity Itself and the aspirant should see his Guru as God Himself.

4. Mantra-Diksha should he taken as a means for God-realisation alone and not for worldly ends.

5. To discard Mantra-Japa after receiving the Diksha, is an insult to the Mantra. Therefore it should be avoided at all cost.

6. An aspirant should give up his evil tendencies, such as passion, anger, greed, envy, jealousy, etc., and cultivate divine qualities like selfless service, renunciation, charity, love, forgiveness, humility and the like.

7. A householder should consider his duties as necessary for his spiritual growth and discharge them creditably. But they should be taken as secondary objective of life, the primary one being the realisation of God. He should try to spiritualise the life of all the members of his familly. He should observe truth, non-violence and Brahmacharya in thought, word and deed as far as possible.

8. He should see the Lord in both His aspects—the formless, attributeless aspect and His aspect with form and attributes. Realising the One Lord present in these innumerable forms, he should feel no distinction among the various deities such as Sri Rama, Sri Krishna, Lord Siva, Lord Ganesha, Lord Vishnu, Goddess Durga, Goddess Lakshmi, etc. These Ishta Devatas are the manifestations of the one omni-present, omniscient, omnipotent Being who is the inner ruler of all. He should not, therefore, disregard any of the deities. He may, of course, have more devotion and love for his

own Ishta Devata, but it should not result in belittling and hating others' Ishta Devatas. Lord Krishna has said in the Gita: "*Yo mam pasayati sarvatra sarvam cha mayi pasyati, Tasyaham na pranasyami sa cha me na pranasyati*—He who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, he never becomes separated from Me, nor do I become separated from him" (VI-30). Goswamiji also writes thus: *Siya ramamaya saba jaga jani, Karahun pranam jori jugapani*—Knowing that the entire world is permeated by Lord Rama and His power,I salute (everything) with both hands folded together!"

9. Every week on the particular day of the week on which he took Mantra-Diksha he should live on fruits alone and that also one time only and on the anniversary day he should observe complete fast.

10. He should not disclose his Ishta Mantra to any one.

11. It is advisable that husband and wife should both get themselves initiated by the same Guru. However, it is not indispensable, in case it is not possible due to any reason.

12. He should do Likhita Japa also. The Mantra notebooks should be kept safely in a holy place. This keeps the atmosphere pure and surcharged with the Mantra vibrations.

13. Have, if possible, a separate room or place for Mantra-Japa and do not allow it to be defiled.

14. Feel always the presence of your Guru and your Ishta Devata.

15. Every initiated married couple should observe the vow of chastity and fidelity.

16. He should take his Ishta Devata as the real owner of the house and do the household work as God's servant.

17. He should have faith in the potency of the Mantra which removes all obstacles.

18. He should do Japa daily at least eleven Malas and he should be regular in his daily Japa.

19. He should not use the index and little fingers while rolling the beads, nor should he allow the Mala to hang below his navel. He should cover the Mala with a piece of cloth. While rolling the beads, the Meru of the Mala should not be crossed. He should turn back when he comes upto it.

20. He should reach a state in which the Japa would go on uninterruptedly in the mind even while he is sitting or standing, eating or drinking, walking or working, waking or sleeping.

May you all be blessed with the Grace of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj! May you be successful in obtaining the Supreme objective of your life through Mantra Japa! May the Lord grant you peace, bliss, prosperity and spiritual advancement! May

you ever progress and attain God-realisation in this very birth ! Hari Om Tat Sat.

THE GLORY OF MANTRA-DIKSHA

1. Man cannot live by bread alone; but he can live repeating the Name of the Lord alone.

2. A Yogi crosses the ocean of Samsara by his Chitta-vritti-nirodha, controlling the modifications that arise in the mind; a Jnani by his Brahmakara-Vritti (by raising the pure thought of Infinity); and a Bhakta by doing Nama-Smarana. There is no end of Lord's powers.

3. The Name of the Lord has a very great power. It brings you face to face with the Supereme Being and makes you realise your oneness with the Infinite and the whole world at large. It bestows immortality. Feel the wonderful and infinite power the Name of the Lord possesses and chant His Name constantly. Time is fleeting. The best way to

utillise it is to remember Him, to chant His Name, sing His glories and meditate on Him.

4. The Name of Rama turns impossible into possible. It was by the glory of Rama-Nama that the stones floated in water, and the bridge, the Setu over the sea, was built by Sugriva and his companions at Rameshvaram. It was Rama-Nama that cooled Prahlada, when he was thrown into a conflagration of fire.

5. Any Name of the Lord is nectar. It is sweeter than sugar-candy. It is the essence of the Vedas. Amrita came out, in days of yore, during the process of the churning of the ocean by the Devas and the Asuras. Even so by churning the four Vedas, the Name of Rama, the nectar, was brought out to quench the three kinds of Taapa (affliction) of the ignorant Jivas. Drink it again and again by constant repetition, just as Valmiki did in days long gone by.

6. The world without Hari Sankirtana is only a burial ground.

7. Japa is a very great purifier. It checks the force of the thought-current moving towards objects and forces the mind to move towards God.

8. Japa eventually helps in obtaining Darshan of God. The Mantra-Chaitanya is hidden in every Mantra,

9. Japa reinforces the Sadhana-Sakti of the Sadhaka. It makes him morally and spiritually strong.

10. The vibration produced by the chanting of a Mantra corresponds to the original vibration that arose from Hiranyagarbha.

11. The rhythmical vibration produced through Japa regulates the unsteady vibrations of the five sheaths.

12. Japa changes the mind-stuff from worldliness to spirituality, from Rajas and activity to Sattva and illumination.

13. The Name of the Lord is an inexhaustible storehouse of spiritual knowledge.

14. Even mechanical repetition of a Mantra plays a great part in the evolution of the soul. Even a simple parrot-like repetition of a Mantra, too, is beneficial. It has got its own effect.

MANTRAS FOR JAPA

1. Om Sri Maha-Ganapataye Namah.
2. Om Namah Sivaya.
3. Om Namo Narayanaya
4. Hare Rama Hare Rama
   Rama Rama Hare Hare;
   Hare Krishna Hare Krishna,
   Krishna Krishna Hare Hare.

5. Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya.
6. Om Sri Krishnaya Namah.
7. Om Sri Ram, Jaya Ram,
   Jaya Jaya Ram.
8. Om Sri Ramaya Namah.
9. Om Sri Krishnah Saranam Mama.
10. Om Sri Sita-Ramah Saranam Mama.
11. Om Sri Hanumate Namah.
12. Om Sri Sarasvatyai Namah.
13. Om Sri Durgayai Namah.
14. Om Sri Maha-Lakshmyai Namah.
15. Om Sri Saravanabhavaya Namah.
16. Om trayambakam yajamahe
    sugandhim pushtivardhanam,
    Urvarukamiva bandhanan-
    mrityormukshiya mamritat.

RULES FOR JAPA

1. Select any Mantra or Name of God (preferably that given by your Guru) and

repeat it from one Mala to two hundred Malas daily.

2. Use a Rudraksha or Tulasi Mala of 108 beads.

3. Use only the middle finger and thumb of the right hand for rollng the beads.

4. Do not allow the Mala to hang below the navel. Keep the hand near the heart or the nose.

5. The Mala must not be visible to you or others. Cover it with a towel which must be pure and washed daily.

6. Do not cross the Meru of the Mala while rolling the beads. Turn back when you come up to it.

7. Do mental Japa as long as possible. If the mind wanders, take to labial Japa for some time, or loud Japa, by rotation, and come back to mental Japa again as soon as possible.

8. Take a bath, or wash your hands, feet, face and mouth before sitting for Japa in the morning. At other times this is not absolutely necessary. Do Japa whenever you have leisure, specially during the Sandhyas or the junctions of the day (morning, noon and evening) and before going to bed.

9. Associate the Japa with rhythmic breathing or Pranayama and meditate on the form of your deity. Keep a picture or idol of the Deity in front.

10. Think of the meaning of the Mantra while repeating it.

11. Pronounce each letter of the Mantra correctly and distinctly.

12. Do not repeat the Mantra either too fast or too slow. Increase the speed only when the mind wanders.

13. Observe Mouna and avoid distractions, calls or engagements at the time of doing Japa.

14. Face the East or the North and sit in a separate meditation room or any good place, such as temple, river-bank, under a banyan tree or a peepal tree, etc.

15. Do not beg of God any worldly objects.

16. While doing Japa, feel that your heart is being purified and the mind is becoming steady by the power of the Mantra with the grace of God.

17. Keep your Guru-Mantra a secret. Never disclose it to anyone.

18. Practise to sit in one steady pose during the Japa.

19. Keep a regular account of your Japa and try to increase the number gradually.

20. Carry on the current of Japa mentally, even at other times, whatever work you may be engaged in.

REMEMBER

Japa purifies the heart.
Japa steadies the mind.
Japa destroys the Shadripus.
Japa destroys birth and death.
Japa burns sins.
Japa scorches Samskaras.
Japa annihilates attachment.
Japa induces Vairagya.
Japa roots out all desires.
Japa makes one fearless.
Japa removes delusion.
Japa gives supreme peace.
Japa develops Prema.
Japa unites the devotee with the Lord.
Japa gives health, wealth, strength and long life.
Japa brings God-consciousness.
Japa bestows eternal Bliss.
Japa awakens the Kundalini.
Japa introduces one to spirituality.
Japa marvellously cleanses the impurities of the physical sheath.

TIME-TABLE FOR JAPA

No.	*Mantra*	*Speed per Minute*		
		Low	*Med*	*High*
1.	OM	140	250	400
2.	Hari OM or Sri Rama	120	200	300
3.	OM Namah Sivaya	80	120	150
4.	OM Namo Narayanaya	60	80	120
5.	OM Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya	40	60	90
6.	Gayatri Mantra	6	8	10
7.	Mahamantra or Hare Rama Mantra	8	10	15

No. of Japa that can be done in one hour				Time required for Completion of one Purascharana, devoting 6 hours daily				
Low	**Med.**	**High**		**Yr.**	**M.**	**D.**	**Hrs.**	**Ms.**
8,400	15,000	24,000	Low	-------	-------	-------	11	54
			Med.	-------	-------	-------	6	40
			High	-------	-------	-------	4	10
7,200	12,000	18,000	Low	-------	-------	1	3	47
			Med.	-------	-------	-------	16	40
			High	-------	-------	-------	11	7
4,800	7,200	9,000	Low	-------	-------	17	2	10
			Med.	-------	-------	11	3	30
			High			9	1	35
3,600	4,800	7,200	Low	-------	1	7	0	15
			Med.	-------	-------	27	4	45
			High	-------	-------	18	3	15
2,400	3,600	5,400	Low	-------	2	23	2	0
			Med.	-------	1	25	3	30
			High	-------	1	7	0	15
360	480	600	Low	3	0	16	0	45
			Med.	2	5	8	5	30
			High	1	7	15	3	35
480	600	900	Low	3	0	16	0	45
			Med.	2	5	8	5	30
			High	1	7	17	3	35

NEED FOR A GURU

A Guru is necessary. The spiritual path is beset with many obstacles. The Guru will guide the aspirants safely and remove all sorts of obstacles and difficulties.

Guru, Isvara, Brahman, Truth and Om are one. Serve the Guru with intense devotion. Please him in all possible ways. Have the mind fixed on Guru as the Atman. Obey him implicitly. His words must be gospel truths for you. Then only you will improve. You will get his Grace. There is no other way.

You will have to deify your Guru. You must super-impose all the attributes of Isvara and Brahman on him. You must take him as an actual God Incarnate. You should never look into his defects. You should see only the Divinity in him. Then only you will realise Brahman in and through the Guru.

The physical form of the Guru will slowly vanish. You will realise the all-pervading

Atman in and through him. You will see your Guru in all forms, animate and inanimate.

There is no other way for overhauling the vicious worldly Samskaras and the passionate nature of raw, worldly-minded persons than the personal contact with and service of the Guru. An aspirant who, with great devotion, attends on his Guru in his personal services, quickly purifies his heart. This is the surest and the easiest way for self-purification.

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

O Adorable Lord of Mercy and Love!
Salutations and prostrations unto Thee.
Thou art Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient.
Thou art Satchidananda
(Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute).
Thou art the Indweller of all beings.

Grant us an understanding heart,
Equal vision, balanced mind,
Faith, devotion and wisdom.
Grant us inner spiritual strength
To resist temptations and to control the mind.
Free us from egoism, lust, greed, hatred,
anger and jealousy.
Fill our hearts with divine virtues.

Let us behold Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us serve Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us ever remember Thee.
Let us ever sing Thy glories.
Let Thy Name be ever on our lips.
Let us abide in Thee for ever and ever.

Swami Sivananda

Our ancestors, the seers, through their own efforts, perfected themselves through the Japa of the Mantras first, and thereafter they initiated their disciples into their secrets. This tradition continues even today with all its importance and significance as ever before. Many saints have reached that perfected state and attained God-realisation. Instances are not rare even today.

If a disciple receives Mantra initiation from his Guru, he actually receives his own accumulated power due to his past meritorious Karmas. The Japa continued for a pretty long period becomes part and parcel of his Sadhana (spiritual practice). For this type of Sadhana, no special qualification is required. What is needed is full faith in and unstinted devotion to one's Guru (preceptor).

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